

FACTFILE

Produced/built 1977-'94/32,540

Engine all-alloy dohc per bank 4957cc V8 with four valves per cylinder and Bosch LH-Jetronic fuel injection

Transmission M-B four-speed automatic

Body/chassis all-steel monocoque with aluminium panels

Suspension independent all round, at front by wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar rear lower semi-trailing arms, upper transverse link, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar

Steering power-assisted rack and pinion

Brakes ventilated discs all round, with servo and ABS

Max power 320bhp @ 6000rpm

Max torque 317lb ft @ 3000rpm

Top speed 168mph

0-60mph 5.9 secs **Mpg** 17.4

New
£85,717*
Now
£10,000**
SAVE
£75,000

DON'T LIKE THAT? TRY THESE



Maserati Biturbo Spider

1984-'91, n/a

Price new

£36,650 (1990)

Equivalent price

today £51,676

Price now £2250/4250/9250

SAVE £45,000



Mercedes-Benz

500SL 1980-'85,

266,226 all SLs built

Price new

£26,100 (1984)

Equivalent price

today £52,200

Price now £2000/6500/11,500

SAVE £45,000



Lotus Elite

1974-'83,

2531 built

Price new

£14,318 (1979)

Equivalent price

today £44,959

Price now £300/1500/4500

SAVE £40,000

WATCH THIS SPACE

Lexus SC430 - £50,850

Wannabe Mercedes SL that isn't. Beached whale styling and blanchmange dynamics mean no one wants it now and, despite reliability and gadgetry galore, it'll almost certainly be the same second-hand.



Thanks to Porsche specialist Autobahn

(024 7633 8533, www.autobahn.co.uk),

which is selling the 928 for £9995

*** Based** on new price of £60,792 in 1990, using

Government data **** For** a good usable car

1989 Porsche 928 S4

Believe in reputations and the 928 comes as a nice surprise. Dismissed by Porsche snobs because it's front-engined, watercooled, and with a V8 instead of a flat-six, it is seen as the softer, less exciting alternative to the tail-engined 911.

But the 928 is a genuine supercar and, in ability at least, the best car here. It's probably the most affordable too, because while the last post-'92 GTS models remain desirable and pricey, early 240bhp 928s and 300bhp 928Ss are ridiculously cheap - with less than £5000 buying decent usable cars. Pay more and you could bag yourself a fabulous quad-cam S4 - how does 160mph for under £10,000 sound?

Porsche head of design Anatole Lapine gave the car incredibly modern styling for 1977 - the bulbous shape, with lots of glazing, no quarter-lights and integrated bumpers, still looks fresh. Then there are those wacky lights, popping up like meerkats on the lookout, and the subtle disc alloys brought in for the 928S in 1980.

Inside, the plasticky interior is starting to feel dated but the low driving position is superb, featuring a classic Porsche upright four-spoke wheel and unappealing but clear VDO dials with a digital read-out monitoring everything from fuel consumption to tyre pressures. Betraying its intentions as a car to tackle the Aston V8 and Jaguar XJ-S as well as Porsche's traditional Ferrari rival, the 928 is comfortable, well-appointed and beautifully screwed together. The electric sports seats are firm and supportive and there are occasional rear buckets as well as a usable boot. Two-up it's very roomy, and its fantastic long-distance ability is let down only by an occasionally thumping ride.

But who cares about comfort - this is a Porsche so it's all about driving. Here the 928 scores again, mainly thanks to the sense of trust it builds in the driver. Tractable and docile tooling around

town, the Porsche is just as relaxing to drive at eight or nine tenths, its all-alloy engine and rear transaxle contributing to near-perfect weight distribution. Meaty power steering is smooth and reassuring with lots of feel, huge ventilated discs offer massive retardation and the cleverly set up wishbone suspension, with 'Weissach axle' link to keep the back tied down near the limit, result in absolute confidence. At speed, in the wet or dry, the 928 feels perfectly planted - and so it should, weighing 3649lb, though it never feels unwieldy.

Then there's the performance: sub-6 secs 0-60mph and flexibility from the 4957cc unit, which offers dollops of power through the rev range, accompanied by a V8 tune that merges the revving urgency of a flat-crank Ferrari with a Mustang's masculine grumble. Even the Merc-sourced four-speed auto is good but, just

as water wings would slow Duncan Goodhew, a slushbox always hinders a supercar. It robs you of the confidence to indulge in the powerslides you sense the capable chassis is crying out for, because you're never sure which gear it'll give you when you punt the throttle.

Just because a car doesn't scare you doesn't mean it isn't fun, so the 928's legacy for being dull is undeserved. It's a supercar that offers the thrills without the spills.

Clockwise from left:
interior now looks a little dated; subtle alloys from '80; fabulous quad-cam V8

